

Testimony of Patrick J. Shenigo
Erie County Commissioner
Interested Party

Before the Ohio Senate
Committee on Energy and Public Utilities
Hearing on Ohio Senate Bill 346

November 30, 2020

Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Ohio Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee:

My name is Pat Shenigo and I am an Erie County Commissioner. I am writing to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 346 (SB 346) to Repeal House Bill 6 of the 133rd Ohio General Assembly. Erie County and Ottawa County are essentially joined at the hip; the two counties share a visitors' bureau, a regional airport, and our mental health and drug addiction services, to name a few. In other words, what's harmful to Ottawa County is harmful to Erie County.

I believe Ohio's best interests lie in preserving our nuclear power generation options. The communities and economies supported by the David-Besse and Perry Nuclear Power Plants would severely suffer without the continued operation of those plants. Nuclear energy is the most reliable, zero carbon emissions energy source we have available to fight climate change. I am in favor of retaining this important source of reliable baseload energy by safeguarding the operations of the David-Besse and Perry Nuclear Power Plants.

Without the continued operation of the David-Besse and Perry Nuclear Power plants, our state's clean energy portfolio will be significantly diminished. Nuclear power is the most efficient and effective-option for reducing carbon emissions. Its high-power density is unrivaled, and it supplies clean energy with a very small footprint. This power option impact on land use, wildlife and human habitat is less than any other energy source.

Nuclear energy provides 90% of Ohio's clean energy in the State. If nuclear energy goes away, then so does essentially all of Ohio's carbon-free emissions. Nuclear energy also provides reliable baseload power to our energy grid. When other sources of energy buckle under the strain of variable weather conditions, nuclear energy remains in constant supply. One need not look further than other states like California and their rolling blackouts to see the issues that come with an energy grid that does not contain a diverse portfolio of reliable energy

The Davis-Besse site is also a massive contributor to our local and State economy. Its economic impact on Ohio rises above \$473 million, and locally, it is Ottawa County's largest taxpayer that contributes to the region. This is critical, as the plant's approximately \$22 million in tax

revenues result in supporting local schools, police and fire departments, and other crucial public services.

Davis-Besse also continues to be a driver of jobs. The plant provides around 700 family-sustaining jobs and has an annual payroll of approximately \$65 million. Through the multiplier effect, Ottawa County and Erie County benefit from the plant through an additional 900 jobs and nearly \$30 million in payroll at other businesses throughout the area. Contractors visiting, as well as local union members and their families, also leave a lasting impression as they create an additional and significant economic impact.

An argument can be made that the free market should decide which businesses succeed and fail. I understand and appreciate those arguments. However, the reality is that Davis-Besse has not been operating in a free market in a long time. For many years, other energy providers such as wind and solar have received taxpayer subsidies while providers like Davis-Besse have gone without. That is not a free and fair market. This is an issue to address with regards to our energy grid going forward.

As I acknowledged above, Davis-Besse and nuclear energy are essential not only for the entire State, but as an industry that provides so much right here within Ottawa and Erie County and the surrounding area.

Therefore, I call upon my colleagues to protect these specific two Ohio nuclear plants, and more broadly, Ohio's nuclear energy option. Nuclear plants have been closing in numerous states without legislative intervention, and Ohio could easily be next. I believe it would be very short-sighted to allow our nuclear plants to close, and I urge collaboration to maintain the David-Besse and Perry Nuclear Power Plants operating. Nuclear power must become competitive in Ohio again.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Erie County.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name of the speaker, written in a cursive style.